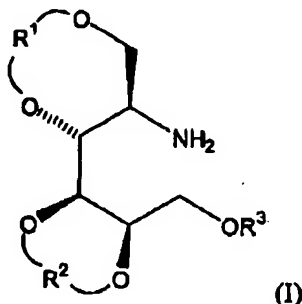


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing a compound of formula (I), or a salt thereof:



where R^1 and R^2 are each independently protecting groups which, together with the oxygen atoms to which they are attached, form part of a dioxane or dioxolane ring; and R^3 is hydrogen or a protecting group;

including the steps of:

- protecting the hydroxyl group at the C-6 position of *N*-acetyl-D-mannosamine, to give a 6-*O*-protected-*N*-acetyl-D-mannosamine, wherein the hydroxyl protecting group at the C-6 position is selected from the group consisting of a silyl group, a benzyl group, or an ester group;
 - reducing the C-1 anomeric carbon atom of the 6-*O*-protected-*N*-acetyl-D-mannosamine using a reducing agent selected from the group consisting of a metal hydride reducing agent or hydrogen gas/metal catalyst to give a 6-*O*-protected-*N*-acetyl-D-mannitol;
 - protecting the four hydroxyl groups of the 6-*O*-protected-*N*-acetyl-D-mannitol with protecting groups of formulae R^1 and R^2 as defined above;
 - removing the *N*-acetyl protecting group using basic conditions and optionally removing the C-6 oxygen atom protecting group using basic conditions to give the compound of formula (I).
2. (Canceled)
3. (Canceled)